

# PUBLIC AUTHORITY



## OPENING THE DOOR

A Newsletter for IHSS Recipients and Providers

### HEALTH CARE BENEFITS FOR IHSS PROVIDERS!



#### Welcome to our Winter Newsletter!

I am excited to announce that after many months of work on the part of IEHP, the Public Authority, SEIU and the County, Health care benefits for IHSS workers began December 1, 2004.

This plan has been designed to provide coverage for eligible IHSS providers who are not eligible for “zero share-of-cost” Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, or other health insurance. In order for an IHSS provider to be eligible to enroll in this plan, State data records must show that you were authorized by the County and paid by the state to work at least 25 hours per month for two consecutive months prior to the enrollment period, and are working at the time benefits begin. In order to retain eligibility in this plan, you must continue to work at least 25 hours per month and data records must show that you were paid to provide these hours. Only IHSS Providers may enroll.

Medical services under this plan are provided by Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP). Enrollment is limited, with priority given to providers who have worked the most hours since July 1, 2002. If no space is available in the plan, eligible applicants will be placed on a waiting list. IHSS Providers can enroll in the annually during an open enrollment period each September and October, as long as there are available enrollment openings, and you continue to be eligible.

Once enrolled, \$1 per month will be withheld from the IHSS paycheck to cover the providers share of the health care premium. In addition, members will be required to pay a co-payment, usually \$10 per service, for most outpatient services at the time you receive care.

We are pleased to be able to offer these benefits to you. If you have questions about Health Benefits, please call us and ask for a Health Benefits Clerks.

**REMEMBER** – The Public Authority is offering ONLY Medical benefits. If you have questions about Dental, Vision, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, or Prescription cards these are UNION benefits and you should call SEIU (your Union) at 1-877-734-8864.

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## PROVIDER REGISTRY

In the last month, registry staff has been working on reviewing and analyzing the registry database. In an effort to keep accurate and correct information, staff has diligently worked on evaluating and correcting the database system. The process involves contacting applicants that have not completed the background check process to see if they are still interested in continuing with the Registry, contacting clients to verify information about providers, deleting old information from the database, etc.

The registry is currently servicing 1,764 IHSS clients. 479 clients have been matched with providers from our registry. We have 1,006 clients in the registry that came to us with their own provider, but want to be part of the PA's registry in case they need a provider in the future. We are working on finding providers for 163 IHSS clients and have sent out approximately 116 applications to interested clients.

The registry has been successful in recruiting providers from all over the county. We currently have 3,017 applicants and providers in our registry. 1,194 providers are on "Available Status" which means that they have passed our background check process. 479 providers are currently working and 1,344 are in various stages of the background process to be placed in available status.

## FREE CPR/FIRST AID TRAINING IS COMING!

The San Bernardino County IHSS Public Authority is happy to announce the first of many exciting trainings we plan to offer. Our goal is to provide quality information and skill building techniques to help you continue to improve your caregiver skills. The Public Authority is offering First Aid/ CPR training for all IHSS Caregivers FREE of charge. Attending this training will enhance your chances of being hired. For additional information please contact Myette Christian at (909) 386-3068. To register for the training please complete the insert in this newsletter. Stay tuned for upcoming trainings!



### CLASS SCHEDULE

**Mon - January 24, 2005**

8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

504 North Mt. View Avenue  
San Bernardino, CA

**Wed - January 26, 2005**

8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Location to be announce

**Thurs - January 27, 2005**

8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Location to be announce

Additional dates will follow, please contact  
Myette Christian at 909.386.3068

### Did You Know?????

With your CPR/First Aid Certification on file, every time your name is on a Registry Referral List, that recipient will know you are CPR/First Aid Certified. This will greatly enhance your chances of getting that job when compared to those who are not CPR/First Aid certified.

## **The Public Authority welcomes Nidia, Maricela and Jamie ....**

The IHSS Public Authority's (PA) Registry Operations is growing. In addition to the Registry operation, the PA has recently developed and completed the implementation of the Provider Health Benefits program. In order to keep up with the registry's growth and the health benefits implementation, the Public Authority hired three new registry clerks.

Nidia Lozoya comes to us from the Performance and Education Center (PERC). She worked for PERC for about a year. Nidia is working in reception and assisting with Registry Operations as well as Health Benefits.

Maricela Aflaki worked as a volunteer for over a year with the In-Home Supportive Services department in Joshua Tree. Marisela has over eight years of customer service experience. She is working in the Victorville office and her main function is registry operations.

Jamie Naughton has six years of customer service experience. Jamie is stationed in the San Bernardino office. Her main function will be the Provider Benefits program as well as registry operations.

## **Members Needed**

There are vacancies on the IHSS Advisory Committee for recipients. The Advisory Committee provides recommendation to the County, the Public Authority and The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. The committee plays an important role in the lives of the elderly and disabled population as well as those who provide care for them here in San Bernardino County. If you are interested, please contact the Public Authority at 1-866-985-6322 for an application.



Violet Castillo



Hilda Phillips



Gloria McGinnis



Delores Johnson



**SAN BERNARDINO IHSS PUBLIC AUTHORITY  
HEALTH BENEFITS  
SAN BERNARDINO IHSS PUBLIC AUTHORITY  
HEALTH BENEFITS**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**1. Who is eligible for the health benefits offered through the San Bernardino IHSS Public Authority?**

In order to be eligible, data records must show that you have been approved and paid to work a minimum of 25 hours per month for two consecutive months, prior to the enrollment period and are working at the time benefits begin. You will continue to be eligible as long as you continue to work at least 25 hours per month.

**2. Will I definitely receive Health Benefits if I apply and am eligible to enroll?**

Not everyone who is eligible for health benefits will be enrolled. County funding is available only for a limited number of slots. Providers with the most hours for the longest period of time will be given the highest priority. Those not receiving benefits will be placed on a waiting list, and applicants with the most hours for the longest period of time will be given the highest priority.

**3. How do I apply for health insurance benefits?**

If you want to apply for health benefits, complete the enrollment form included in this packet and return it in the postage-paid envelope postmarked by October 31, 2004. Don't forget to sign the form.

**4. How much will I have to pay for my health insurance benefits?**

You are required to pay a premium of \$1 per month as your share of the monthly health care insurance cost. In addition, you are required to pay a \$10.00 co-payment for many of the outpatient services you receive.

**5. How will I pay for my health insurance?**

If you elect to have health insurance, the premium in an amount of \$1 will be deducted from your paycheck each month.

**6. What happens if I am receiving health benefits but I don't work 25 or more hours in a month? Will I lose my health insurance?**

You must continue to work at least 25 hours per month to remain eligible. Your data records will be reviewed every three months (Quarterly). If data records show that you have not worked 25 hours for at least two of the three months in the quarter, you will be sent a benefits termination letter and health coverage will stop at the end of that month.

**7. How can I get my health insurance coverage restored if I lose it?**

If your coverage is terminated and you later want to apply for re-enrollment, you must re-qualify by working a minimum of 25 hours per month for two consecutive months prior to the next Open Enrollment period. Once these criteria have been met, you may re-apply during the next open enrollment period in September and October. If there is a waiting list, you will receive benefits when available.

**8. If I am eligible to receive health benefits but don't apply during the Open Enrollment period, may I apply at any time I work 25 hours per month for 2 consecutive months?**

During the first Open Enrollment period from September 1 to October 31, 2004, all eligible providers will be given an opportunity to apply for health benefits. If you choose not to apply at this time, you can apply during the next annual Open Enrollment in September and October, providing you maintain your eligibility. If there is a waiting list, you will receive health benefits when available.

**9. Who will provide the health services and where can I obtain care?**

Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) is the health benefit provider. Refer to the enclosed Schedule of Benefits and

Question # 10 for information regarding where care can be obtained.

**10. Where can I get more information about the benefits provided by the Plan?**

We have enclosed a Schedule of Benefits that describes what the plan provides. If you have additional questions about the benefits provided, call IEHP at 1-800-591-IEHP (4347).

**11. What if I am already enrolled in Medi-Cal or another health insurance program?**

Medi-Cal is comprehensive health care coverage available to qualified low-income persons, usually without monthly charges and without paying anything when you use a service. In addition, Medi-Cal covers a broad array of health services. IHSS providers with other health insurance coverage or who are enrolled in coverage such as zero share-of-cost Medi-Cal, Medicare, Healthy Families or Healthy Kids, spousal coverage, individual, conversion or coverage under a Group Plan offering domestic partners are not eligible to enroll in the health plan.

**12. If I enroll, when will coverage be effective?**

For this initial enrollment period, coverage begins December 1, 2004.

**13. When can I start getting care?**

You can start getting care when you become an enrolled IEHP Member. The Public Authority will confirm your eligibility and request IEHP enroll you in the health benefit plan. After you become an IEHP Member, you will receive an IEHP ID card. The card lists the contact information of the doctor and hospital that you have chosen. Show your card to your provider when you access care.

**14. Can I get health insurance for my family members?**

This health insurance benefit is for IHSS providers only. Spouse or dependent coverage is not available under this plan. For information about other affordable health insurance options for children, call IEHP at 1-866-294-IEHP (4347).

**15. If I lose my eligibility, can I purchase continued coverage?**

Federal law requires that all workers have the right to purchase their group coverage for a specific period of time after employment ends. You will be responsible to pay the full amount of premium to continue under this coverage. This law is called COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985). By law, at the time of your disenrollment from any health insurance plan, you will receive an initial notification, which explains your rights under COBRA. Once your employment ends, you will have 63 days to elect coverage with no lapse in coverage.

**16. What should I do if I lose my IEHP card?**

If you lose your IEHP ID card, call Member Services at 1-800-591 IEHP (4347); a new card will be sent to you.

**17. What should I do if my address or phone number changes?**

Any time you have a change in address or phone number, call IEHP Member Services at 1-800-591-IEHP (4347) and the IHSS Public Authority at 1-866-985-6322 to report the changes.

**18. Can I change my Doctor?**

Yes, you can change your doctor and choose a new one. Call IEHP Member Services at 1-800-591-IEHP (4347) to make the change. If your change request is received by IEHP by the 25th of the month, the change will be effective the 1st of the following month. If your change request is received by IEHP after the 25th of the month, the change will be effective the first day of the subsequent month. You can search for an IEHP Doctor at [http://ww2.iehp.org/IEHP/Membership/Getting+Started/d\\_default.htm](http://ww2.iehp.org/IEHP/Membership/Getting+Started/d_default.htm)

**19. How can I get specialty care?**

If your Doctor determines that you needs specialty care, your Doctor will refer you to see a Specialist. IEHP's Doctor-2-Doctor referral gets you to a Specialist fast. Your Doctor can refer you straight to a Specialist for your first appointment. You MUST get a "Referral" before you get the specialty services. Your Doctor will request the "Referral" for you.



## **IHSS Public Authority offers IEHP Health Benefit Plan to its Home Care Providers**

IHSS Public Authority has purchased a health benefit plan for its home care providers from IEHP, Inland Empire Health Plan. The program provides coverage for doctor visits, hospital services, and prescriptions. Having worked in collaboration with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and IEHP for the past year to develop this benefit plan, IHSS has just completed an Open Enrollment period, enrolling over 1600 workers into the IEHP Large Group Plan.

“We’re proud to be part of the Public Authority’s and SEIU’s efforts to provide health coverage for its care providers,” said IEHP CEO Richard Bruno. “In a time when others are cutting programs, the Public Authority and SEIU are moving forward to improve employment standards for the home care provider.”

The Public Authority is matching funds against federal and state money to pay the care provider’s monthly premium. “We wanted to make a true offer to our home care providers, not one they couldn’t afford to take advantage of,” said Helen Lopez, IHSS Executive Director. Workers pay \$1 per month for their coverage, with \$10 co-pays for most medical services.

Eligibility criteria, as determined by the Public Authority and SEIU, is also less demanding than those imposed by many employers and by IHSS programs in other counties. To qualify, home care providers must either live or work in San Bernardino County, and have worked 25 hours or more per month for 2 consecutive months.

“By securing affordable and attainable health coverage for our home care providers, we all benefit,” continued Ms. Lopez. “Care providers get the medical care they deserve, and can then offer better care to our clients. Continuity of care is improved with workers missing fewer workdays. Health Care coverage is also an incentive to attract workers to the field.”

The IEHP Large Group Plan benefits cover Doctor visits, hospitalization and outpatient services, emergency services, prescriptions including mail-order services, X-rays and lab work, and mental health services.

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**IHSS Public Authority (In Home Supportive Services)** is the employer of record for San Bernardino County’s IHSS care workers, who provide personal care, attendant care and homemaker services to low income, frail adults living in their home. Without these personal services, recipients would be forced to live in a Medi-Cal paid nursing home.

**The Service Employees International Union (SEIU), AFL-CIO**, is the largest and most diverse union in California. With over 500,000 members, SEIU is the largest union in state and local government, health care, social services, building service, and horse racing. SEIU also represents a substantial number of classified school and community college employees, law enforcement, corrections, probation, and court employees.

**IEHP**, is a Knox-Keene licensed Health Plan located in San Bernardino, California, and is organized as a not-for-profit public agency. The IEHP service area includes San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, and currently serves over 270,000 Members in the following three Programs: Medicaid (called Medi-Cal in California), the Healthy Families Program, and the Healthy Kids Program.



## Brightly Colored Plates, Utensils Help People With Alzheimer's Eat More

People with advanced Alzheimer's disease eat and drink more when they're served with brightly colored plates, cups, and silverware, according to Massachusetts researchers.

The finding comes from researchers including Tracy Dunne, PhD, former postdoctoral fellow at Boston University's Gerontology Center and the Geriatric Research and Education Clinical Center of the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Bedford, Mass.

Significant weight loss affects 40% of people with severe Alzheimer's disease.

Depression and eating difficulties have been viewed as possible explanations, but a recent study suggests that vision problems might be a factor. The ability to see colors diminishes with age, and people with Alzheimer's often have a hard time seeing contrast, which can make it tough to distinguish "a plate from a table setting, food from a plate, or liquid from its container (e.g., milk from a white cup)," say the researchers.

The study is published in the recent issue of the journal *Clinical Nutrition*.

Dunne and colleagues studied nine elderly men with advanced Alzheimer's disease. The men were on average 83 years old and scored 3 out of 30 on mental status exams.

The researchers measured how much each participant ate daily. Then the men were served meals on white plates, white cups, and stainless-steel silverware for 10 days. Next, they used bright red tableware and cutlery for 10 days.

The men ate about 24% more food and drank almost 84% more liquid with the red tableware compared with the white tableware.

Similar results came from tests conducted one year later with five original and four new participants.

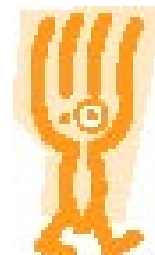
This time brightly colored blue tableware prompted the men to eat 25% more food and drink almost 30% more liquid compared with white and stainless-steel settings.

Afterward, the men returned to white and stainless-steel tableware. More than half of the participants ate slightly more (about 10%) than before the test, indicating that the effect of the colored environment may have carried over.

Contrast appears to be the key, not color.

Pastel-shaded red and blue tableware, which created less contrast, had little or no impact.

Calling their findings "encouraging," the researchers suggest that caregivers consider using high-contrast tableware to help people with advanced Alzheimer's disease view their environment and help them eat and drink better.





## **An Apple a Day for Cancer Prevention**

### Eat Your Spinach, Broccoli, and Apples for Cancer Prevention

An apple a day plus a veggie-intensive diet are the stars of new cancer prevention studies.

The findings are being presented at the annual Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research conference in Seattle.

A chemical in apples helped prevent colon cancer in laboratory and animal studies, reports lead researcher Francis Raul, PhD, research director of the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research in Strasbourg, France.

Three or more servings of vegetables a day -- potatoes not included -- reduced risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma by 40%, says lead researcher Linda Kelemen, RD, ScD, with the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma occurs when cells in the lymph nodes -- small organs that help fight off infection -- divide and grow out of control.

"It's been estimated that up to one-third of cancers are related to food we eat. ... That's a lot of preventable cancers," Kelemen said in a news teleconference held today. Antioxidants in fruits and vegetables protect the body from damaging free radicals "like rust-proofing your car."

### **Apples and Cancer Prevention**

In the apple studies, Raul first exposed cancer cells to various antioxidants found in apples. They found that one type of antioxidant, called procyanidins, triggered a series of cell signals that resulted in cancer cell death.

In an experiment with laboratory rats, the rats were exposed to colon cancer-causing substances and then fed a mixture of water and apple procyanidins. Rats getting "apple water" for six weeks had half the number of precancerous lesions in their colons compared with rats eating the regular diet.

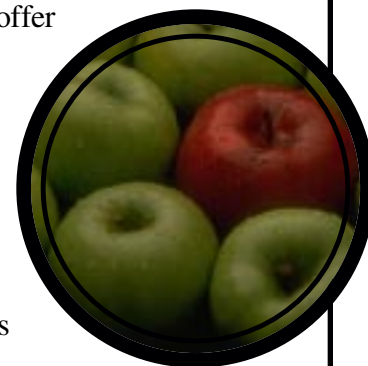
The finding "suggests that eating the whole apple, including the skin, might offer some [cancer prevention] benefits," says Raul.

Cyanidins are also found in abundance in red wine and cocoa.

### **Cancer Prevention and Veggies**

In their study, Kelemen and her colleagues identified 450 men and women between ages 20 and 74 diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Each provided diet information in a survey. She compared the cancer patients' diets with a group of people without cancer.

Those who ate both green leafy and cruciferous vegetables got "particularly strong" cancer prevention protection, she reports. Cruciferous vegetables include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts.







The daily diet of the cancer-free people included:

- **One serving (one cup) daily of greens like spinach**
- **One-half cup of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, or Brussels sprouts**

Also getting good marks in cancer prevention: Whole fruits, yellow-orange-red vegetables, and processed tomato products like tomato sauce and juice. However, the cancer risk reduction was not significant, says Kelemen.

As for specific nutrients and vitamins:

- **Selenium and zinc have some cancer prevention effects.**
- **Individual vitamins like A, C, E, individual carotenoids (like beta-carotene) and retinol (promoted as a vitamin A booster) did not lower cancer risk.**

“If more people ate at least three servings of vegetables per day, there would be substantial reduction of cancer rate,” Kelemen added. “Why wait until you get cancer to change your eating habits? Do it now, when you’re healthy, so you can stay healthy. Set a good example for your children. Grocery stores and supermarkets offer prewashed, ready-to-eat vegetables. Some have salad bars with already prepared fruits and vegetables. They are just as costly as buying fast food and a lot healthier.”



## Do You Know

Effective 1/1/2005 the Public Authority (PA) assumed the responsibility for the processing of Workers’ Compensation claims for IHSS Providers.

Providers reporting a work-related IHSS Provider injury should contact the PA:

1-866-985-6322



## Hygiene... Keeping It Clean

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is an increase in infectious diseases and a growing resistance to antibiotics. Therefore effective cleaning techniques and basic health practices such as frequent hand washing are especially important. How can a busy caregiver prevent infections? Simple hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent spreading germs.

### Defending Against Needless Infection

**To minimize the chance of infection, always wash your hands:**

- Before and after contact with the person in your care and with other people.
- When returning from a trip outside the house.
- After using the toilet
- Before preparing medications, doing a procedure or preparing food. When clean cleaning, work from the cleanest to the dirtiest area and always wear latex gloves when giving personal care.

### Hand Washing the Right Way:

1. If the person in your care has an infection, use a bottle dispensed antimicrobial soap.
2. Rub your hands for at least 30 seconds to produce lots of lather. Do this away from running water so the lather is not washed away.
3. Use a nailbrush on your nails; keep your nails trimmed and free of chips.
4. Wash the front and back of hands, between fingers and at least two inches up your wrists.
5. Rinse well under warm running water. Repeat the process.
6. Dry your hands on a clean cloth or paper towel.

### Soiled Laundry Handling

**As a caregiver you are around a lot of soiled laundry. So make it safe:**

- Always use latex gloves when handling soiled laundry.
- Carry dirty linens away from your body.
- Never shake soiled linens. (Germs may contaminate the floor and spread throughout the house on the soles of shoes.)
- Use a leak-proof plastic bag, tied shut, for linen that contains body fluids or waste.
- Bag soiled laundry in the same place where it is used.
- Wash soiled linen separately from other clothes.
- Fill the machine with hot water, add ¼ cup bleach and detergent rinse twice, and then dry.
- Clean the washer by running it through a cycle with one-cup bleach or other disinfectant.

### Prevention of Odors

**Germs need moisture, warm temperatures, oxygen, darkness, and nourishment to grow. When the germs are happy, the result can be unpleasant rooms to be in.**

To eliminate some strong odors try:

- Keeping all storage areas dry and disinfected.
- Leaving a partially can of ground coffee open under the bed.
- Pouring a few drops of mouthwash in commodes and bedpans.
- Placing mouthwash-saturated cotton balls in the room.
- Spraying a fine mist of a solution of white distilled vinegar mixed with a few drops of eucalyptus or peppermint essential oil.
- Saturating cotton balls with vanilla extract and placing them in containers that retain strong odors.
- If all else fails, use electrical and mechanical devices for removing odor.

### If Using a Wheelchair:

- Wear leather gloves
- Wash your hands frequently. Between washings use prepackaged cleaning towelettes.
- Keep the wheelchair clean and free from grime buildup.



## SEIU Announcement

SEIU 434B, moved to a new office! There new address is:

195 N. Arrowhead Ave.  
San Bernardino, CA 92408  
(909)885-1597  
1-877-734-8864

## A Happy Note.....

San Bernardino County  
In-Home Supportive Services  
**Public Authority**



600 North Arrowhead, Suite 100  
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0034  
Business (909) 386-5014 • TTY: (909) 386-5080  
Toll Free: (800) 985-6322 • Fax: (909) 386-3071


11/1/2004

Barbara Marr

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in San Bernardino County In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority Registry Service. Enclosed you will find the application that I assisted you in completing and information regarding our program. Please sign the application and return to us in the envelope provided.

Sincerely,

 Mario Vicarra ☺

IHSS Public Authority Registry

*This is a wonderful program - I  
hope the election doesn't dump it!*  
*Barbara*

If you have a good experience you would like to share with us about our services, please call, fax, write or e-mail us with your comments

# Helpful Numbers

## EMERGENCY

Emergency 911  
APS-Adult Protection 1-877-565-2020

## TRANSPORTATION

Omni-Trans / Access 909 383-1680

## FINANCIAL

Social Security Admin 1-800-772-1213  
Transitional Asst Dept 909-386-9511  
Unemployment 1-800-300-5616  
Disability 1-800-480-3287

## TAXES

Franchise Tax Board 1-800-852-5711  
IRS 1-877-777-4778

## LEGAL

Inland Co. Legal Serv. 909-884-8615  
Seniors Only 909-888-3889  
Housing Mediation Brd. 1-800-321-0911  
Victim/Witness Advoc 909-387-6540  
Public Conservator 909-387-2536

## LEGAL AID

Redlands 909-792-2762  
San Bernardino 909-889-7328

## CITIZENSHIP SERVICES

INS 1-800-375-5283  
909-386-3296  
Mexican Consulate 909-889-9836

## HEALTH & CONSELING SERVICES

Behavioral Health 909-421-3200  
Agewise 909-421-9247  
Rolling Start 909-884-2129  
Inland Regional Center 909-896-3000  
Blindness Support 909-341-8359  
Public Health 909-387-6280  
Arrowhead Medical Ctr 1-877-873-2762

## IN-HOME CARE

Public Authority 1-866-985-6322  
IHSS 909-891-3900  
SEIU Local 434B 1-877-734-8864  
IEHP 1-800-591-4347

## DAAS

SIA 1-800-510-2020  
DAAS 909-891-3900  
Linkages 1-877-565-2020  
MSSP 1-877-565-2020  
Ombudsman 1-866-229-0284

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